



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Resonance

Citation for published version:

Pelzer-Montada, R 2012, *Resonance: On the work of Jacki Parry*. Glasgow Print Studio, Glasgow.
<<http://www.gpsart.co.uk/Home/DisplayExhibition?year=2012>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Publisher Rights Statement:

© Pelzer-Montada, R. Resonance: On the work of Jacki Parry

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Resonance

To resound is to sound again, to carry on sounding. Resonance is then the characteristic catachresis of our strange, resounding time, in which time can no longer be counted on to pass as it used to. Sound is time's skintight silhouette, for there is no sound that perdures, no sound whose outline is not drawn out in, and out of, time. But, in resounding, the twinning of time and sound is loosened, and sound starts to fill space (Connor, 2006, p.1).

After my first visit to Jacki Parry's exhibition at Glasgow Print Studio I promptly forgot its title. What stuck in my memory was its sonorous quality: the soaring swell of the large *Ocean*, the rustle of *Boolakeel*, the reverberations of *Lightcatcher* and the peeling allegrezza of the small, brightly coloured casts such as *Blue Twirl*.

Lest we forget, Parry is an artist specialising in works made of paper, not a musician. So what are the connections of paper and her paper works with sound? I will answer this question by, first of all, considering paper in art in general and Parry's work in particular.

Parry has spent the best part of her long career as an artist in researching and engaging with paper. She was instrumental in shaping its adoption by artists through her long years of teaching at Glasgow School of Art and by setting up a paper workshop in the city. Her training and collaborations include professional instruction and practice in Japan, the world's acknowledged centre for hand-made paper due to the historical and cultural significance of the material in the country.¹

Parry belongs generationally to the artists who adopted paper, alongside other 'low' materials such as soil, wax, grease and so on during the 1960s. Paper became a medium in its own right rather than fulfilling the function of a mere support which it had occupied for centuries. This was a time when earlier avant garde critiques were more broadly embraced and artists fully began to question time-honoured artistic canons and the separation between art and life as exemplified, amongst other criteria, by established artistic media.

But what is this stuff, paper, as an artistic material? What does it do? It is now recognised that the importance of artistic materials in the making of an art work has been conventionally sidelined by art history, at times helped by artists who believed the convenient myth of artistic creation overcoming the lowliness of its constituents. In the tradition of Platonist or Aristotelian idealism, "material" is usually understood as a medium, a vehicle for form, which serves to elevate it into the lofty realm of art. If addressed, the physical constituents of art works tend to be approached from the perspective of technical history' (Herrmann, 2006, p.952).

The focus on technical matters seems to be the case for much writing on art in paper. But, in addition to numerous exhibition catalogues dedicated to the art form, recent studies into the so-called 'material aesthetic', especially in the German context, have tried to address this ideological blind spot in art history and criticism. So far, there is one substantial book on paper in art by a German art historian

(Bardt, 2006) which undertakes a 'material iconography'. The latter is different from traditional iconography as it draws out the 'meaning, structure and effect of artistic materials' (Bardt, 2006, p.12) rather than subject matter as in Panofskian iconography. The aim is to consider materials' use, perception and cultural connotations and symbolic ascriptions. This applies to materials whether they are 'natural', such as soil, or matter which is already the result of cultural activity as with hand-made paper. Bardt's study focuses on three-dimensional work in paper and the different techniques which artists have used, such as paper making, moulding, folding and so on. The latter provide the book's basic structure.² The text by Bardt remains untranslated. No similar investigation has yet appeared in the Anglo-Saxon context to my knowledge. This may be partly due to the fact that paper in the broader social environment simply appears 'to be there'. Its ubiquity obscures its artistic possibilities from being fully perceived, let alone being studied by academics. Moreover, as already indicated, in the art context paper has been a staple for centuries, providing, seemingly, the mere backdrop for drawings, prints and artists' books so that it appears invisible. By the same token, paper as an artistic medium may be considered quite 'tame' compared to other more contentious and hence attention-grabbing substances or everyday materials in art that range from industrial waste to biological matter, even animal or human faeces. Another factor may be that recent artistic practices have tended to employ multiple media rather than a single medium as in the past. The result is that the emphasis on the single medium, such as paint, stone or paper, has been sidelined to some extent.

Yet paper has allowed artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, to name but one prominent example, to reflect on the historical and cultural connotations that are affiliated with it by changing, enhancing or alternatively endowing the material with meaning and properties that hitherto it did not possess. In this way artists bring connotations and functions, which are normally absent or overlooked in paper's everyday manifestations, into visibility .

Since the advent of the printing press one of the foremost associations of paper (and printing) is with its production and dissemination of knowledge. While Walter Ivins (1953) has developed this argument with respect to printmaking, it is only earlier this year that a comprehensive study of paper in relation to this history has been published in Germany.³ Parry's work is permeated by references to the historical and cultural preeminence of paper as a technology of utmost social and cultural significance.

Specific properties of paper lend themselves to both actual as well as metaphorical figuring. Some of these are here described by German paper artist Dorothea Reese-Heim (1990): 'Paper is, on the one hand, a sheet-like form, a kind of fleece which results from the intermeshing of plant fibres. (...) on the other hand, paper has the ability to incorporate materials into itself, to swallow them, to wrap and soak them up. Traces of such interventions and processes are evident in the paper mass or pulp' (p.30; quoted in Bardt, 2006, p.40. My translation.)⁴ In Parry's work this particular quality of paper has long been a conspicuous feature, see especially the works in her exhibition *ways of editing* in 1998.⁵ In the current exhibition the various 'books' show such direct inclusions or incorporations. The property of absorption that Reese-Heim has noted functions more indirectly in *Remade Northern Library* (2011).

This piece is constructed of multiple layers of individual photo-etchings. Each sheet is based on a collage of strips of shredded computer paper. The collage was then digitally photographed and subsequently printed. Whether in actual terms or more circuitously, in both these works the intertextual nature of cultural and scientific knowledge is highlighted, be that its constant exchange, interconnectedness, even its borrowing from or reference to other texts or images.

Bardt (2006) speaks of the 'Wasserstoff Papier' (p.44), the watery materiality of paper (literally 'Wasserstoff' means 'hydrogen' in German). The artist Bernd Ruediger-Damerow says: 'Paper comes into existence through water and it remains marked by water. Paper entails water's mass. Paper is filled by streams of water and their movements and sentiments' (Quoted in Bardt, 2006, p.44).⁶ The direct link to water as well as its indirect referencing can be detected in Parry's work as well (see *Ocean*, see *Boolakeel* and the various small sculptural vessels and abstract forms which seem to be bursting with air – or water). In this sense paper draws attention to the fundamental reliance of all life and cultural production on the 'natural' substance of water.

Paper is not only a product of culture, it is also made from cultivated, as well as purely 'natural' plants. The former, traditionally, are mulberry (in Japan), flax and cotton in Europe and since the nineteenth century, wood. Nevertheless, connotations of the humble and the mundane continue to adhere to the material. Certainly paper's adoption by artists since the 1980s, Parry amongst them, was for some positively linked to its seeming naturalness, even 'primitiveness', the minimal technological input it required and its largely negligible monetary value. It served as a means to reject art history's obsession with precious or 'difficult' materials. Additionally, for other artists paper's lowly quality was attractive not due to its assumed naturalness but on account of its sheer ubiquity and predominance in mass and popular culture. This immersion in and infiltration of the world of everyday objects and pleasures by paper has particularly occurred since the 19th century and has often involved the imitation by paper of other materials. One well-known and early example from the art context which demonstrates this may suffice: Braque and Picasso included such everyday paper into their Cubist still-lives in the form of scraps of wallpaper which imitated wood grain. Parry's work shuttles between the affiliations of paper with mass culture, the democratisation of knowledge and information, as well as its almost primitivist simplicity and seeming naturalness.

Paper's association with mass communication is evident, for example, in pieces like *Boolakeel I* and *II* (2011) which are based on strips of printed text on paper (see also the large-format print *Tower of Babel*, *Dark Water* (2007) with its source of collaged bands of words). Sometimes the source paper is made up of photocopies from books; sometimes the paper source is directly cut up (in one case from an artist's materials catalogue, no less). As with *Remade Northern Library* the resulting collages are scanned or photographed and digitally printed. The final prints as new pieces of sensuous, intertextual knowledge are fabricated not only on the basis but out of actual 'pieces' of existing knowledge, as discussed above.

Paper's and papermaking's humble connotations are conspicuously foregrounded in the *Five Books* (*Unstitched*, *Unstuck*, *Spineless*) (2012). However, this work turns

out to be more slyly complex than at first assumed and maybe suggested by the title. Made of pulp derived from natural plant sources the books consist of simple, off-white coloured, 'rough' and fibrous sheets, held together by a similarly textured, yet contrasting earthy-brown cover sheet. The cover, size and format of each book are the same. Their differences derive from the subtle variations of tones and textures. These in turn stem entirely from the plant of which the paper was made, such as common rush for the covers and white beam, abaca and flax amongst others for the content. It may be worthwhile noting that paper's predominant whiteness which seems so self-evident to us has, of course, occurred only as a result of industrial developments in the last century. Non-white, especially textured paper today, even if it is not hand-made, carries the connotations of directness, simplicity and craft. Thus, *Five Books* (2012) creates a double-reference. The connotations of the simple, even base material, on the one hand, are highlighted by colour and grain of the paper. The book format, on the other hand, marks the objects as repositories and signifiers of knowledge and culture. Nature masquerades as culture or vice versa. In this fashion the interpenetration of nature and culture, which has been regarded by cultural theorists as one of the dominant themes of our time, are made palpable. The artist has spoken of 'natural writing', especially with the regard to an entirely non-humanly generated 'paper', namely sheets of seaweed from the West coast of Scotland, battered and pulped by the sea against rocks to form sheet-like, fibrous layers or 'pages', enscribed by and with the processes and natural sources that generated them.⁷

While today paper still plays a role in print and packaging, we are witnessing the increasing erosion of the former through digital media. Paradoxically, this gradual substitution of paper from its position as source and carrier of knowledge may give it once again a cultural value that it has lost, even if its historical rating as 'white gold' may have vanished irretrievably.

Parry runs the gamut of papermaking processes, from using pulp as a sculptural material (see earlier works, such as *Rainmaker*, 1987, and in the present exhibition the numerous small casts, such as *Blue Twirl*, 2011 or *Purple Entrapment*, 2012) to watermarking, embossing, cutting and any combination of these techniques. In addition, sewing, folding and weaving are part of her repertoire. This seems no coincidence, as paper is closely affiliated to textiles, in terms of its make up and many of its qualities. Historically and up to the present day, the more valuable papers are made from linen or cotton clothes as opposed to wood cellulose. The etymology of the word 'tissue', applicable today to particular forms of both textile and paper, shows this: The Middle English 'tissu' was 'a rich kind of cloth'; the word derives from Old French, from the past participle of 'tistre' which is 'to weave'. The latter has its root and meaning in the Latin 'texere' (The Free Dictionary), hence 'texture' and 'textile'. In addition to using a huge variety of sources for her paper, as already indicated, several pieces of Parry's are literally made from gampi silk tissue (see *Remade Northern Library*, 2011, for example); others, like the small cast sculptures, appear so fine and translucent as if they were made from it. This is a theme to which I will return.

Although Parry makes most of the paper out of which the art is created herself, as we have seen, she is equally interested in utilising existing paper products. Literally

and metaphorically she delves into the history and techniques, the 'fibre' from which her material is fabricated.

These investigations into and with paper are presented in a variety of formats. Framed pieces, conventionally or digitally printed, allude to the support role which paper has played for the best part of Western art since the Renaissance. (For the former, see *Remade Northern Library*, 2011. For the latter, see *The Tower of Babel* series, 2007.) Nevertheless, some typically framed pieces in the exhibition provide a more intricate picture. Take, for example, the series of *Memory Weavings* (2009 - 12) about which Jo Ganter has spoken in the introduction of this catalogue. Here, the deconstruction and re-construction as well as the metaphorical and physical connectivity that is inherent in the word 'weaving' manifests tangibly as woven pieces of paper or paper textiles. These images' level, yet densely volumetric surface makes visible and contradicts our usual expectations when looking at a framed print.

The two works with the title *Boolakeel I and II* (2011) which I mentioned already are also framed, yet play a subtle game with the notion of paper as a straightforward support for the printed image. The image shows a dense vertical arrangement of printed text strips, each strip a couple of millimetres wide and approximately eighty centimetres long. As already indicated, the original collage for this print has been photographed before being printed. The simple, yet compelling effect is of a moving, undulating textured field. Taking the title into account, which is the name of a remote rural place on the southern coast of Ireland which Parry visited on a residency, the abstracted shapes seem like bulrushes. Therefore, in a humorous doubling up, the image components resemble the fibres of paper, the very substance of the source from which the image is made.

The title's onomatopoeic quality and the kinetic appearance of the image turn this piece into an image-sound, in miniature, of the swishing and rustling of words, both written and spoken, directly and indirectly, which accumulate around and within us daily. As in everyday life, some of these words are clear and legible, important and memorable even, others recede back into the constant swell and ebb of 'information'.

The visual and oral image conjured up by the title of Yeats's 1899 poem *The Wind among the Reeds*, which gives Parry's series its sub-title, corresponds to the image-sound piece, as just discussed. Thinking of the work's sonorous quality, it may be remembered that in classical mythology both Pan's flute and that of Marsyas were made of reeds or rushes. The blowing of the reed by Pan and Marsyas was regarded as being culturally inferior to the plucking of the Apollonian lyre. This was chiefly due to the danger (and attraction) of submersion into bodily ecstasy which the flute provided as opposed to the more refined and lofty sensations induced by the strings (see Steven Connor, 2002).

If Parry's image as a poetic response to the constant overflow of information alludes to the word/sound barrage around us that thrills but also threatens to engulf us, the precision of the cut strips appears like a form of notation which is both ordering as well as destructive. It allows us, as viewers, to both revel in the multiple possibilities

of combinations across the field of words. It also demands that we orientate ourselves, in an attempt to find a way through ambiguity, excitement and chaos, to make sense, if only temporarily.

Other works in the exhibition tie in to what is now an established mode of paper art, namely three-dimensional pieces, which are differently displayed. The small-scale sculptures, which I mentioned already, are framed and displayed on the wall or in free-standing cabinets. In contrast, *Lightcatcher* (2012) and *Ocean* (2012) are large installation pieces which command significant parts of the exhibition space.

These two key pieces, *Ocean* (2012) and *Lightcatcher* (2012), are another instance of the simplicity with which Parry operates. They also demonstrate a competing, although not antagonistic tendency in her work. In *Ocean* (2012) the pleasure in textile handling that characterises both pieces erupts into an ornamental, almost narrative profusion. *Lightcatcher* (2012) illustrates the abstract minimalism of Parry's work. Both approaches are controlled with great sensitivity and allow a probing of the potential of paper in different directions while addressing the viewer in contrasting ways.

Ocean revels in the decorative intricacies of richly deep-blue coloured, cut, folded and stitched strips of hand-made paper. These are inventively fashioned into an abstract pattern that is then repeated many times to create a lattice-lace of impressive dimensions (the exhibited piece measured 245 x 245 x 122 centimetres). This abundant, versatile, fabric-like assemblage, which can potentially expand and grow to even larger dimensions, is displayed in analogy to the title as a room-defining 'wave', cascading from the ceiling into a 'pool' on the ground.

If *Ocean* (2012) has a potentially exhilarating effect on the viewer, the equally ambitiously sized rectangle of *Lightcatcher* (2012, 245 x 202 x 122 centimetres) was originally conceived as a homage to a screen for the Japanese tea ceremony [?]. In the exhibition at Glasgow Print Studio it was slung horizontally over a wooden pole and created a tent-like structure with a shallow interior space. Thus it functioned almost like a protective skin, a shelter inviting us to seek refuge inside, albeit imaginatively rather than practically. This shelter-like envelope is made up of minimalist paper rectangles sewn from hand-made paper. The resulting plane of strict, geometric regularity is in contrast to its own texture of semi-translucent, neutral, off-white tones and crackled surface, resembling an epidermis. The personal connection in this piece relates to outback camping trips of Parry's youth in Australia, the broader connotations may lie in a sense of the precarious stability and uncertain protection that our economic and environmental foundations provide. The piece also reminds us of paper's capacity for wrapping and thereby shrouding, disguising or hiding something or, alternatively, enveloping or protecting.

The appearance or behaviour of both pieces is a further instance of paper's practical and metaphorical conduct as a skin which changes and renews itself. The sonorous attributes of both pieces derive from their dissimilarities. If *Lightcatcher* (2012) hums with a deep, soothing yet light whispering then *Ocean* (2012) beats with a rolling, sibilant, even giddy pitch.

The penultimate piece I wish to consider is *The Box* (2012). It is an irregularly

shaped upright, light-weight paper card ensemble with an oval see-through hole in the central oblong rectangle. Its individual sections are printed with slightly irregularly spaced horizontal and vertical stripes. At first glance the object's screen-like, two-dimensional model-type character belies the title. A second glance reveals or confirms the source of this curious object and the accuracy of the title: The viewer is looking at a card board tissue box just as they are used throughout countries all over the world. But this three-dimensional, every-day object is here folded-out, enlarged and re-created. The flat card board construction of *The Box* (2012) acts as both a means of connection as much as a separating membrane. The screen-like quality of the piece permits, on the one hand, a looking-through and, on the other, erects a dividing shield.

Conflicting associations with the lined or striped surface of *The Box* (2012) seem to reinforce such a divergence. As Michel Pastoreau in his book on stripes has said: 'To stripe a surface serves to distinguish it, to point it out, to oppose it or associate it with another surface, and thus to classify it, to keep an eye on it, to verify it, even to censor it.' Yet, he also says that 'In the stripe, there is something that resists enclosure within systems' (Pastoreau, 2003).

Bar the reference to an everyday item that normally does not merit any attention other than serving as a reservoir for customary daily hygiene, the source for this work in form of the tissue box held very special meaning for Parry. After her mother's death, Parry found a tissue box entirely covered in her mother's hand-written notes. It was, in effect, a memory tool to help her cope with her dementia. The paper tissues were untypical of her mother's life-long habit of using 'proper', textile handkerchiefs. The hesitant and clearly cumbersome writing tellingly and touchingly demonstrated Parry's mother's plight in struggling with her diminishing faculties, both mental and physical. In personal terms, the art object with its folded-out flatness, devoid of content and Parry's mother's writings, may have been a means for Parry to work through her own grief. It may even serve as a modest and fragile memento mori for her mother. This notion seems to be reinforced by a print of the folded out plain box in black, titled *The Other Side* (2011).

If the large sculptural pieces in the exhibition carry a 'big' sound, a sound that indeed, to follow Connor's (2006) quote at the beginning, 'fills space' and that may be tied to the large natural and social forces that shape our lives, *The Box*'s emissions are of a more modest everyday nature. This is partly due to its size and provenance, but also its shape and surface design. We hear the small, repetitive and usually unheard noises of moving about one's everyday business, such as getting up, using the bathroom, preparing breakfast; of the touching and moving of 'things' and ourselves. Albeit insignificant, these equally compose the fabric of our lives.

Throughout the exhibition Parry's sculptural training is evident, but this is especially so in the various small paper casts (see Figs). Their delicate nature requires them to be displayed in Perspex boxes. This mode of presentation does not, however, diminish their immediate, affective appeal. By turns hauntingly fragile (*Winter Morning*) or temptingly luscious (*Yellow Venus*, 2005), these paper casts are made from paper pulp that results in either a smooth and diaphanous, almost

gleaming surface (*Tender Body*, 2012) or a softer, matt and invitingly tactile appearance (*Two Pillows*, 2011). Referencing plant- or body forms, small sea creatures or semi-abstract shapes these mostly brightly coloured, monochrome pieces have the appeal of jewels. Their sensuous attraction is further enhanced by their apparent volume and seeming weight which is almost wondrously achieved without sacrificing the appearance of lightness. Such seductive and paradoxical material signifiers are satisfyingly and wittily brought into play at the same time as they are undermined by the deceptively straightforward material from which they are crafted.

An invitation to touch seems to be the most outstanding quality of handmade paper. Requiring little technical assistance it is itself the result of multiple actions of touching, namely rolling, folding, creasing, pressing, tearing, scrunching, crumpling. Parry's small paper casts with their skin-like appearance not only elicit the desire to touch, they seem to incorporate it. Steven Connor has made a comment that seems particularly apt with regard to the haptic effect of these casts and the skin-like property of paper in general: 'touch is a gaunt, bony word for the shimmering aurora of different sensations that arrive at or pass through the skin, or the imagined skin. For we do not need the skin to feel tactile sensation: wherever we are solicited to such sensation, a kind of imaginary skin is procured. (Connor, 2010, p.1/2) Connor's suggestion of the effect of looking at a touchable object appears to describe accurately the response to Parry's small sculptures. One review of Parry's exhibition stated: 'The work is not virtual. It is real. You may be even able to touch it.' What this viewer forgot to say is that the work touches you too!

The sculptures couple personal and broader concerns, as in *Resonance* (2012) where the violently interrupted growth of plant forms is a metaphor for political conflict. Parry recounts that the impetus for the piece came from a troubling observation on the day that the second invasion of Iraq was started. Not only had the long awaited spring daffodils been forcefully uprooted from a pocket of urban green, they had also ominously been decapitated. *Inscription*, by comparison, hints at a new language, fuller, lighter, more colourful and sensuous than we may know. *Purple Entrapment* (2012) and *Yellow Venus* (2005) intimate bodily, intensely private memories or states. Whatever their theme, the colour and shape of these pieces help to reinforce the sonorous theme which I mentioned at the beginning and which characterises Parry's work in the exhibition as a whole. The casts' bulbously stretched and taut skins seem to invite not only a caressing touch but also the rhythmic vibrations of sound.

As to the nature and scope of such sounds, Steven Connor is reminded of Joyce's Leopold Bloom who thinks "‘Everything speaks in its own way’", as he listens to folds of paper falling off a drum in a printer's shop.' Connor adds a crucial qualification however. He says, 'everything indeed speaks, but now perhaps not necessarily in its own way - *in propria persona* - but rather in borrowed accents, mobile turns of phrase, mirrorings, accompaniments, descants, impersonations. (Connor, 2012, p.8). What better way to describe the actions of an artist who indeed 'borrows', 'mirrors' and 'impersonates' sounds, images, words, events, private and public, and in this way allows us to experience aspects of ourselves?

Bibliography

Bardt, J (2006) *Kunst Aus Papier, Zur Ikonographie eines plastischen Werkmaterials der zeitgenössischen Kunst*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

Connor, S (2012) 'Panophonia'. A talk given at the Pompidou Centre, 22nd February 2012 <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/panophonia/panophonia.pdf> [Accessed 10/7/2012]

Connor, S (2010) 'Imaginary Touch', A Talk given at the *Touched* Conference, Liverpool Biennial, 18 September 2010
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/imaginarytouch/imaginarytouch.pdf> [Accessed 10/7/2012]

Connor, S (2009) 'Michel Serres: The Hard and the Soft.' A talk given at the Centre for Modern Studies, University of York, 26 November 2009.
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/hardsoft/hardsoft.pdf> [Accessed 10/7/2012]

Connor, S (2006) 'Resonance.' A talk broadcast on *Resonance* FM, 14 July 2008. Available at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/resonance/resonance.pdf>. [Accessed 9/7/12]

Connor, S (2002) 'Seeing Sound: The Displaying of Marsyas.' A lecture given to mark the inauguration of the MA in Text and Image at the University of Nottingham, 16 October 2002. <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/marsyas/> [Accessed 15/6/2012]

Herrmann, D F. *Art History*. Nov2006, Vol. 29 Issue 5, p952-957. Review of *MATERIALASTHETIK: Quellentexte zu Kunst, Design und Architektur* (Book); RUBEL, Dietmar; WAGNER, Monika; WOLFF, Vera (2005)

Ivins, W M (1953) *Prints and Visual Communication*. London: Routledge

Parry, J (1999) *ways of editing - works in handmade paper*. Glasgow: The Paper Workshop

Pastoureau, M (2003) *The Devil's A History of Stripes*. New York: Washington Square Press

Sloman, P (ed.) (2009) *Paper: Tear, Fold, Rip, Crease, Cut*. London: Black Dog Publishing. With an essay by Richard Sweeney.

Thomas, J and Jackson, P (2001) *On Paper – New Paper Art*. London: Merrell Publishers. (Exhibition catalogue published by Crafts Council, London)

¹ For a brief overview of the genealogy of paper art since the 1960s word-wide, see Thomas and Jackson (2001), p.15-18.

² Bardt points out that the techniques cannot always be clearly differentiated. The different sections are: handmade paper; moulding; embossing; folding; cutting; replacing; experimenting; destroying. The German term for handmade paper (Papierschöpfen) is more specific about the procedure of making a sheet of paper by hand, by immersing the deckle into the wet papermass. This practical meaning of 'schöpfen' is retained in the English word 'scoop'. Yet 'schöpfen', appositely in the present context, can also mean 'to create'. (See also Bardt, 2006, p.14)

Like Bardt's book, Thomas and Jackson (2001) take a similar structural approach in the catalogue accompanying the 2001 Crafts Council exhibition *On Paper – New Paper Art*. Parry's work was

included in the exhibition and her role in British paper art is highlighted in the text.

3 The study is by German professor of comparative literature and journalist Lothar Müller (2012), catchily titled *White Magic. The Epoch of Paper*. In line with current cultural interests, Müller points out paper's nomadic character, based as it is on sources which were available independent of geographic or climactic conditions. (Müller, 2012, p.23)

Müller includes a fascinating paragraph into the reasons for the long time it took for paper to arrive in Europe due to the ideologically motivated side-lining of this Arabic or 'Eastern' invention. Interesting from today's perspective is also its initial treatment with distrust, as with many new technologies. (See also Sweeney, 2009, who mentions the resistance in Europe to the 'pagan' art of paper. Sacred text had to be written on parchment even after the introduction of paper. In: Sloman, p. 7/8). Yet paper also quickly assumed a magic power and was held to be so precious, it was referred to as 'white gold' (Bardt, p 9). Müller makes another important point that has particular resonance. As with all new technologies, they do not merely passively reproduce what already exists. Paper is never only a support, as Müller points out. To name but one example: Paper is not only the reproductive means for the stories gathered under the title *1001 Night*; it becomes an active medium for the production of the text itself. (p.33).

4 'Papier ist einerseits ein durch Eigenverklebung von pflanzlichen Fasern entstandenes blattartiges Gebilde- ein Vlies (...) Andererseits hat das Papier die Eigenschaft, Materialien in sich aufzunehmen, zu verschlingen, einzupacken und aufzusaugen. Spuren von Eingriffen und Prozessen werden in der Papiermasse gesichtet.' (Dorothea Reese-Heim in Kat Berlin 1990, p.30; quoted in Bardt, 2006, p.40?)

⁵ Parry, J (1999)

6 'Papier entsteht mit Wasser, es bleibt vom Wasser gezeichnet, es beinhaltet dessen Massen mit. Papier ist gefüllt von Wasserströmen und deren Bewegungen und Gefühlen.' (Katalog Saarbrücken 1980 p.57, quoted in Bardt, 2006, p.44)

7 Such a work could be seen in analogy to notions of life as writing itself. As Steven Connor (2009) in his text on the philosopher Michel Serres remarks: 'Life not only writes itself, life is this writing of itself: bios is autographic, hence autobiographical. Where Galileo had seen the mathematics in which the book of nature was written in terms of algebra and geometry, Serres asks us to understand it as algorithmic. An algorithm is a procedure for effecting sequences of actions, in variable orders and configurations' (p.23).